

REMARKS

I. Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 10-28, and 30-45 were pending in the above-identified patent application.

Claims 1, 10-28, and 30-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,589,892 to Knee et al. (hereinafter "Knee") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,550,575 to West et al. (hereinafter "West").

II. Summary of Applicants' Reply

Applicants have amended claims 1, 14-16, 18-20, 23, 25-27, 30-39, 41, 43 and 44 in order to more particularly define the claimed invention. The amendments are fully supported by the specification as filed and do not add new matter.

The claim rejections are respectfully traversed.

III. The Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 10-28, and 30-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Knee in view of West.

A. Independent Claims 1, 27, and 31

Each of amended independent claims 1, 27, and 31 is directed toward exercising access control over a television program. A password is received for entering into a master mode of operation. In the master mode, a blocking criterion is received for blocking a television program from being accessed by a user in a first mode of operation different from the master mode. An unblocking criterion is also received in the master mode for unblocking a blocked television

program that meets the unblocking criterion in order to permit, without providing the password, access to the blocked program by a user in the first mode of operation. For a second mode of operation different from the master mode and the first mode, one or more programs are allowed for selection in the master mode for access by a user in the second mode of operation so that the user in the second mode is permitted to access, without providing the password, only the selected programs, to the exclusion of all other programs being telecast. Knee and West, alone or in combination, fail to show or suggest each and every element set forth in the claims.

Knee is directed toward a parental control system that includes a "Key Lock Access" option that allows a user to control access to individual channels and programs by requiring the user to enter a user-specified access code "key" before ordering or viewing programs, channels or events selected to be controlled under this option. Knee further describes an alternative method for restricting access to programs using a "Lockout" screen. Using the Lockout screen, a user may limit or permit access to programs based on other criteria such program title, time of day, day of week, *etc.* Finally, Knee's system allows the use of user-defined channel presentation sequences, which represent a preferred particular list of channels which a particular user selects.

West is directed toward a viewer discretion television program control system that can store suitability ratings for each program that a television may receive, which may be used to control program access. Individual users are assigned personal identification numbers (PINs), and a local authority can control program viewing based on program ratings as well as allocated viewing time to individual users.

Knee and West, alone or in combination, do not show applicants' claimed invention. For example, the combination of Knee and West fail to show or suggest a mode of operation where a

user may only view programs that have been previously selected in a master mode and where the master mode requires a password.

As previously mentioned, Knee discloses user-defined channel presentation sequences. The Examiner contends that "[with respect to Knee], note that the master can modify the favorite or preference lists at anytime" (Action, p. 4). Applicants respectfully submit that favorites or preference lists have nothing to do with blocking and unblocking programs as applicants claim. Rather, favorites or preference lists represent shortcuts to particular channels that users desire to view or are commonly viewed. These lists do not constitute "blocking" or "unblocking" as claimed by applicants, because even though a particular channel may not be accessed directly through the shortcuts in the list, it can still be accessed without a password. Also, Knee's favorites list is a list of channels, not a list of programs. Applicants' claims require that individual programs be blocked and unblocked.

However, nothing in Knee shows or suggests applicants' claimed second mode of operation in which only previously selected programs are unblocked, leaving all other programs blocked.

The Examiner contends that "the West reference discloses setting up various favorite channel list . . ." (Action, p. 4). First, as discussed above, favorites lists have nothing to do with blocking and unblocking programs. Second, West makes no mention of setting up favorite channel lists, either in the sections cited by the Examiner (West, col. 3, line 57-col. 4, line 5, col. 10, line 66-col. 11, line 16 and col. 13, line 30-col. 15, line 1+) or anywhere else. Furthermore, West does not show or suggest at least applicants' claimed second mode of operation where a user may only view programs that have been previously selected in a master mode and where the master mode requires a password. As West states, the system can "(1) Temporarily deactivate

program control . . . ; (2) Enter a plurality of PIN numbers; (3) Select and activate one or more rating systems . . . ; (4) Enter exclusion codes for proscribing individual or groups of programs; and (5) Enter individualized time allocation codes" (*id.*, col. 7 lines 29-40). These options are only directed toward the default viewing mode of West, which is necessarily based on ratings-based restrictions. None of these options are directed toward applicants' claimed second mode, which is different from a master mode and first mode, in which a user is restricted to only viewing programs previously selected in a password-controlled master mode (i.e. as opposed to West's exceptions to ratings-based controls).

For at least the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that Knee and West, whether alone or in combination, do not show each element of amended independent claims 1, 27, and 31. Therefore, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims. Claims 10-26, 28-30, 32, and 41-43 depend from claims 1, 27, and 31, and add further elements thereto. Applicants therefore request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of these claims as well.

B. Independent Claims 33, 34, 36, 38, and 39

Each of amended independent claims 33, 34, 36, 38, and 39 requires selecting one or more television programs for access by a user in a viewing mode different from the master mode and permitting only the selected programs to be accessed in the viewing mode without providing the password, to the exclusion of all other programs being telecast. As described above with respect to independent claims 1, 27, and 31, Knee and West, whether taken individually or in combination, fail to show or suggest this claimed feature.

Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of amended independent claims 33, 34, 36, 38, and 39 for at least the reasons provided above. Claims 35, 37, 40, and 44-45 depend from independent claims 33, 34, 36, 38, and 39 and add further limitations thereto. Applicants therefore request reconsideration and allowance of these claims as well.

IV. Conclusion

For at least the reasons discussed above, applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Prompt consideration and allowance are therefore respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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